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1910

Hesper

Phosphor



JOHN WILLIAM SCHOLL

HESPER-PHOSPHOR

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN WILLIAM SCHOLL

11

AUTHOR OF

“THE LIGHT-BEARER OF LIBERTY, ETC.”

“SOCIAL TRAGEDIES, ETC.” “AN

ODE TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE.”

‘Nonumque prematur in annum’—*Horace*



1910

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HESPER-PHOSPHOR.

Creak the icy maples drooping o'er the hedge's
 crystal wall,
And the sheeted pinetrees shudder till their
 ghostly burdens fall.

Shrouded thick in moonlit whiteness lies the
 pavement and the street,
And the lawn, shrub-tufted, glitters with the
 fret-work of the sleet.

Stiffened in his mail of hoar-frost, gone for aye
 his fruited prime,
Lies the old Year, dying, dying, waiting for the
 midnight chime.

Let us keep the wonted vigil! While the dying
 hours go by,
While his frosted breath is on us, let us watch
 the old Year die!

Many a midnight by the firelight have we
 watched the old Year out,
Greeted then the new-born Year, and hailed
 each other with a shout,

And the night grew wild with whistles, and the
merry anvil's sound
Woke the village, woke the sleeping countryside
for miles around.

But tonight be hushed alarum! Peace brood o'er
us far and near,
For a wondrous Age is passing with the passing
of the Year!

And the youngest of us here will pass away
gray-bearded men,
Be forgotten as these verses, when a century
dawns again!

Vale! Vale! Strokes of midnight! Rustle of
the sable pall!
Vale! Vale! Parting splendor! Hush and
pomp funereal!

Grandest Age of all the ages since the march
of mind began
From the dull unconscious atom to the crowning
type of man!

First a million million ages ere the rolling year
was born,
Then a hundred million slumbered ere as yet
'twas early morn!

“Out of Chaos into Cosmos!” was the infinite
decree,
And at dawn the dry land lifted from the uni-
versal sea,

And the vapors hung and brooded o'er the hot
and humid earth
Till the tepid Ocean labored in her myriad
myriad birth!

Life from Death? Aye, Life from Death,—a
wonder grown familiar now,—
Though remains unanswered still the old sphinx-
riddle of the “How?”

Ask no final Whence? nor Whither? 'Tis
enough to watch the sweep
Of the rising tide of life that issued from that
ancient deep.

Build your systems, Metaphysics! Dream your
dreams, Enthusiasm!
You will never find the Alpha, never bridge the
yawning chasm!

Whether countless universes ran their courses
one by one
Ere the present Wondrous Order its ascending
race begun

Leave to childish minds that love to chase the
rain-bow's hidden gold,
Or to starveling logic-hunters that have left the
shepherd's fold

Just to stray in barren pastures, tired of Truth's
green meadow-land,—
Just to thirst mid sage and cactus, blinded with
the drifting sand.

Ask no final Whence? nor Whither? 'Tis enough
for you and me
If we mark the sea-weed drifting in that warm
primæval sea,

For potential in that floating swarm of mute
Eoic life
Lies the soul of man awaiting its development
through strife.

How the green life climbs the sea-shore, mounts
the everlasting hills!
How the blind touch grows to eyesight! How
sensations grow to wills!

And a thousand forms of creeping, running,
leaping, flying things
Battle for the Earth's dominions like hereditary
kings.

Battles royal red with carnage, myriads perished
for the few,
But the little band that conquered peopled all
the earth anew.

Coward blood and weakness perished, strength
and royal blood prevailed,
Till the lion's thews were born, and Jove's cloud-
dwelling eagle sailed.

Rose erect at length among them one more noble
than the rest,
Life superior slowly growing to supreme in
head and breast.

Heir of all that mind had conquered, son of half
a million years,
In his brain involved the greatness of a myriad
dead careers,

Reptile, bird, and beast had struggled, suffered
and enjoyed that he,
Crown of Life and Sum of Being, might fulfill
the old decree:

“Out of Chaos into Cosmos! Out of darkness
into light!
Out of matter into spirit! Out of blindness
into sight!”

Like a quiver stuffed with arrows from the
armory of the past
Brain and heart were armed with every shaft
that mind had ever cast.

Like the bearded grain that hoards within its
narrow flinty cell
Three months' sunshine, Soul imprisoned all the
mystic light that fell

From her blue skies overhead and from her
silent stars of night,—
Danaë to the virile ages in their long incessant
flight,

Till a race was born that sometimes in its best
embodiment
Conquers Nature and compels her to subserve
its own intent,

Makes a Caliban of lightning, rides the chariot
of the seas,
Ties the continents together, makes its dreams
realities!

But impartial Nature levies on each race her
fatal tax.
Overplus in aught is purchased by a somewhat
else that lacks.

At each turning-point of races, as of men, they
stand and choose,
Conscious or unconscious, boots not, what to
gain and what to lose.

And we chose to stand erect with ample front
expanded high,
Masters of the fecund earth and lords of all the
sea and sky.

Gone therefore the thews that grappled, gone
the armor of defense,
Gone the hardihood that recked not, gone the
keenness of the sense.

Old Prometheus, manhood-maker, loosed the
tongue, nor failed to teach
Incoherent cries to mingle into man-uniting
speech,

Called the wild unsocial tribesman from the cliff
and from the den,
Made the village, chose the chieftain, gave new
laws to social men,

Gave them flint and bronze and iron, kindled
fire upon the hearth,

Set the vestal in the home to guard the new and
marvelous birth,

Put the skins of beasts upon them, gave them
flocks and lowing kine,

Curved the plowshare, yoked the oxen, taught
the elm to wed the vine,

Marked the seasons, set the feast-days, gave the
virgins dance and song,

Wreathed the bowl of rich Lyæan whence the
cup went round the throng.

Centuries of centuries titanic dæmons of Fore-
thought

With their ever-crescent forces daily, hourly
moved and wrought,

Till the vasty lump was leavened, man became
self-conscious mind,

And papyri kept the record of the deeds of
humankind.

But a sable thread was mingled in the growing
web of life.

At the earliest dawn of being Fear was born
amid the strife;

Then Life's field of darkness widened, broidered
with a sable thread,

And the Parcae's subtle weaving grew a chron-
icle of dread.

Starving from the fruitless chase the rude barbarian in his tent

Dreams of starting noble game and follows till the night is spent,

Sees his comrades, shouts among them, lets the fatal arrow fly,

Bickers o'er the fallen booty,—greets the new day's golden eye,—

And the dreaming and the waking are *one* vision unto him,

Real as the strength that unspent throbs within each lusty limb.

While his body lies supine a subtle something wanders free,

Seeks again the distant godland, climbs the mountain, skims the sea,

Or, in hostile ambush fallen, screams and flies the demon shapes,

Makes for the deserted body, wakes in anguish and escapes.

So the dreamer's airy phantoms, shades of friends and enemies,

Live for his untutored fancy Being's primal verities.

When the long long sleep that wakes not with its white calm supervenes,

And the chieftain's ghostly double wanders on in distant scenes,

Shout the assembled guests and kinsmen, shout
the slaves of his domain,

Wake ten thousand mournful echoes to recall
him home again,

Sit and watch the placid sleeper, drive the vul-
tures from their prey,

Till the ghastly rigor warns them of the shade's
too long delay.

Drunk perchance with undreamed splendor in
the great ancestral Hall

He forgets their ancient homage, hears not their
despairing call.

Honored in that Hall of Fathers, chief among
the warrior hosts,

He returns not to their yearning from the sun-
set land of ghosts.

Then the funeral pyre is built and high the
honored corse is laid,

Fire is kindled, to the flames a thousand votive
gifts are paid,

And the best-loved wife in transport leaps into
the sacred fire,

And the slaves make loud contention which shall
mount the master's pyre,

And his horse is slain beside him harnessed for
the regal chase,

And the stag-horn lance is brought him and the
ponderous armored mace,

Long the funeral feast is kept, as suits the warrior's high degree.

Thousands heap the lofty barrow for immortal memory.

But the earth is not the same earth, and the sky
is less serene,
For the empire of the Unseen claims allegiance
of the Seen.

Swift as thought, unseen as wind, unfelt but
present everywhere,
Lowers the ghostly Tyranny and broods the
never-sleeping Care.

Time revolves his swiftest cycles. Death, the
harvester of Time,
Thrusts his sickle in the nations, and men fall
before their prime.

Hind and hero fall together, chaff amid the
golden corn,
But the fallen hero only overlives the morrow
morn.

Thus with each translated warrior grows the
unseen realm of shades:
Will on will, a countless synod, earth and sea
and sky invades,

Till the very air is darkened, earth infected with
a pest,
And the ocean-stream roars round her with a
demon-stirred unrest.

How the crushed souls writhe in anguish, how
the mangled forms rebel
'Twixt those millstones of despair, an upper and
a nether hell!

For the all-beholding heaven from his brazen
canopy
Shakes the pitiless plagues upon them as the
sun-god's arrows fly,

Hurls the thunderbolts and hailstones, pours the
devastating flood,
Sends the legions of the hoar-frost, blights the
fruit within the bud,

While the old confederate earth-god, hoarding
up the sun-god's beams,
Feeds the Hydra of the fen and 'stills a poison
in his streams.

Fear, Life's first-born, child of panic, tyrant of
the seeing eye,
Slave of every unseen terror hung between the
earth and sky,

Gathers up her unhewn stones and heaps an
altar to her foes,
Where the blood of countless victims in propitia-
tion flows;

Temples rise on every hilltop, Python sleeps in
every cave,
Voices fraught with fearful boding speak where
oaks centennial wave,

Flights of birds athwart the heavens weave their
meaning in the sky,

Entrails of the slaughtered victim steam with
hidden prophecy;

Earth and air are dark with riddles and the
omens never cease,—

And it's oh for certain knowledge, for the crush'd
soul's health and peace!

So betwixt the gods and men the sacerdotal
caste is given,

Shepherds of the people, first, to guard them
from the wrath of heaven,

But erelong grown crafty despots reaping where
they have not sown,

Zealous for the temple's treasure just to plunder
for their own.

War-gods ruled the tribal heavens, war-chiefs
their vice-gerents stood.

Blood was wine to god and hero, and the gods
were drunk with blood.

Tribe was swallowed up in tribe, and gens
enslaved by hostile gens,—

Perished discord and disunion, perished civic
impotence,

Conquered valor, conquered union, conquered
right that strengthens might,

Conquered cunning, craft and forethought, con-
quered might that makes for right.

Myriad rills of civic manhood, gathered into
widening streams,
Rolled majestic down the ages bending to the
despots' dreams.

Bounded swift and ever swifter forward then
the race of man.

One by one the eastern empires swift but glor-
ious courses ran,

Till at length a conquering manhood, having left
its Aryan home,
Made the splendor that was Greece and made
the glory that was Rome.

Long the golden eagles brooded o'er the imperial
seven hills.

Long the Eternal City flourished, built a purple
name that fills

Ten long centuries with splendor. Rome, the
mistress of the seas,
Stretched her right hand to the westward,—
Gaul unlocked her treasures,—

Stretched her left hand to the eastward,—Asia
filled it with the spoils
Of the old Levantine empires, cloth of gold and
perfumed oils,—

At her right foot lay the honors brought from
Dido's ruined pile,

At her left foot knelt the Egyptian with the
offerings of the Nile,

While behind her rose the war-cries and the
clash of German swords
Driven o'er the Rhine and Danube with their
wild barbarian hordes.

Civic virtue, martial valor, justice and the reign
of law,
Hearts of oak and thews of iron, and the nations
stood in awe!

When the Caesar's mighty hands the Janus-
temple gates had closed,
And beneath the mild Augustus all the happy
world reposed,

What Cassandra mid the purple could the im-
pending fates foretell,
While the poet's proudest vaunting unto all men
sounded well;

That the empire should be bounded only by the
ocean-stream
And endure to endless ages splendid as the
Caesars' dream?

But, alas! the mighty rhythm of the age's up-
ward surge
Dooms all glory to extinction, even at its top-
most verge.

Roman valor drained in battle, virtue checked
in her career,
Turned to wealth and luxury nor dreamed that
any doom was near,

Till the mocking legionaries set the Caesars'
 throne to sale,
Swearing to the highest bidder with their thun-
 derous "All hail!"

Soon the roving hordes that fretted on the
 Danube's burdened shore
Saw the wealth and saw the weakness, saw and
 lusted more and more

For the spoils of conquered kingdoms, for the
 booty of farm and town,
Looked and lusted, leaped the barriers, on the
 eagles' nest swooped down.

Wave on wave of primal darkness, pouring from
 the frozen North,
Swept the Caesar from the throne and swept the
 glory from the earth,

And the only light that glimmered in the uni-
 versal night
Was the aftershine of Athens lingering round
 Byzantium's height.

Centuries long that darkness brooded and the
 moon was blood on high
And the stars forgot their office in the blackness
 of the sky.

Came again the twin-born scourges, priestly
 mitre, royal sword,
And the half-quenched powers of evil were re-
 quickened and restored.

Wild iconoclasts had smitten every marble into
dust

And consigned the precious parchments to the
realms of moth and rust,

Wan fanatics scourged their flesh and made with
God's wide-flashing levin
Life the worthless antechamber of an endless
golden heaven,

While the fierce, ambitious zealots armed with
scaffold and with flame
Raged to stifle human progress, strove the daring
soul to tame.

Flamed the fagots, flashed the axes, one by one
the noblest fell
Mid the solemn priestly mockery and the wild
mob's fiendish yell.

Then the herds of human cattle bent their necks
beneath the yoke,
Harnessed to a brutish service, patient to the
driver's stroke.

Yet the sleepless Soul of Nature, never thwarted
of her end,
Sowed the blood and calmly waited for the
harvest blood must send.

But the thick-sown seeds of nations slumbered in
the Empire's mould
Though Life's Maytime could not wake them
from the Winter's lingering cold.

Goth and Vandal, Celt and Saxon, and the
tardier Muscovite,
Were the dim prophetic promise of some far
dawn's whitening light.

For in God's æonic rhythms every fall beneath
the plane
But foredooms a rise above it,—every loss is
crowned with gain.

Thanks to thee, O blinded Turk, the heathen's
dread, the christian's scorn!
Thanks and hail, O glorious city, guardian of
the Golden Horn!

Gallant Winkelried of nations, dying that a
world might live,
Thou hast given in ample measure all that mortal
strength can give.

When the Moslem hordes came sweeping thou
didst bare thy warrior breast,
Sheathe the death within thy heart and win the
victory for the West,

And thy purple life-blood scattered through the
nations of the earth
Warmed the dreary winter midnight, quenched
at last the age-long dearth,

Turned the face of manhood forward, lifted up
the spirit's eye,
Wrought the new birth of a world, and set
Hope's radiant star on high.

Greece reborn and Rome reawakened! Though
the cowled monastics raved,
From their crypts the precious hundredth of the
morning light was saved.

Had the Scarlet Sibyl sitting muffled in her Cave
of Night
Offered to the heedless Ages all her hundred
leaves of light,

And at each refusal scattered half the treasure
to the winds,
Till, despairing, she had flung the remnant to
her shaven hinds?

Or with long unsated hatred had she hunted
down the light
Till it found a long asylum in her dungeon's
kindly night?

Little recked the patient scholar how the precious
leaves were lost,
While he drank the golden Wisdom that his soul
could not exhaust.

How the eyes grew dim with searching, how the
hands with toil grew weak!
How the fires that burned within him turned
to ash upon his cheek!

But the World-soul flamed within him, and a
thousand kindred lives
Glowed like purple clouds of dawning when
their radiant god arrives.

Woke the giant Demos starting, night's dark
mantle half withdrawn,
Moved his mighty limbs and struggling turned
his huge face to the dawn,

And the nations felt a shudder running under
altar and throne
As of earthquake under cities dreading to be
overthrown.

Fair Italia, bride of Athens, mother of the
modern world,
Thine the daring Ocean-tamer who with faith-
led sails unfurled

Westward braved the saragozzo on the salt sea's
stagnant verge,
Braved the faithless compass needle, and Atlan-
tic's stormiest surge,

Followed still with hope and wonder, cheered by
seabirds' landward flight,
Gazing from his lofty flagship till a New World
hove in sight.

Thine the bards and thine the scholars who with
dauntless energy
Toiling mid the wrecks of Time restored the lost
Antiquity.

So the dreams of men were widened by thy
gifts, O lavish land,
And the souls of countless thousands felt their
little world expand.

Life drew meaning from the vastness of its
long inheritance,
Earth gave promise in the vistas of her measure-
less expanse.

When the German built his presses and swift
cunning multiplied
Thousandfold the scriveners' hands the Demon
of the Darkness died.

Quickening leaves with morning light sped over
all the waiting earth,
And the yearning soul of genius leaped and came
to marvelous birth.

Woke the giant Demos struggling like a lion
from his lair,
Dashed the sleep from out his eyes, and shook
the dews from out his hair,
And the trembling nations grappled to maintain
their empery;
Yet the triple crown was shivered in the giant's
victory.

Stalked the Titan through the nations, snatching
here a kingly crown,
Planting there a human right, there putting
proud Assumption down,
Till at length he built a nation hewn from virgin
wilderness
Where the dragon of Oppression nevermore
should find access.

Grandest Age of all the ages since the march of
mind began
From the dull unconscious atom to the crowning
type of man,

Heir of all the countless ages, son of half
a million years,
In thy purple youth embodied strength of
myriad strong careers,

Noble bards sang round thy cradle, and a glori-
ous burst of song
Filled and thrilled thy youth with music that
reëchoes loud and long;

Not the songs of helmed heroes flashing through
the imbattled host,
Nor of tempest-driven sailors touching every
charmed coast,

Not the maddening dithyrambics filled with
ruddy Bacchus' praise,
Nor the lays of unveiled Venus set to feast the
public gaze,

But the songs of human yearning and of pur-
pose chaste and high,
Songs of love's imperious passion quenched by
pitiless destiny,

Songs of vernal greenth and beauty and of pure
autumnal gold,
Songs of summer woods and bird-notes, songs
of harvest hundredfold,

Songs of hoary Ocean panting 'neath his
burdened argosies,
And of happy havens taken after stormy
voyages,

Odes to Freedom, odes to Victory, and the free-
man's battle hymn,
Shouts of patriot exultation while the mortal eye
grows dim,—

Songs of inner mystic beauty, songs of perfect
form and grace,
Flowers of heart and soul that make the crown-
ing glory of our race.

“Alma Pax!” the new Age groaned with all the
patient power of prayer,
But the immortal gods were deafened by the
brazen trumpet's blare.

War's loud front and horrid hair were shaking
terrors through the world,
And his blood-red banner waved to every stormy
blast unfurled.

Now his hounds are kept in leash a-snarling in
their secret dread,
Keeping peace by daily wasting Europe's tithes
of wine and bread,

For the hand of Toil grown thrifty, fostered by
an arméd peace,
Clutches at the Demon's throat and bids the red
destruction cease,

Though in Afric's vast dominions and degenerate Cathay
Thrift lets loose the dogs of war to open Trade's untrammeled way.

Yet the Soul of Manhood dreaming sits upon
his central throne
Forging with unfailing prescience times unborn
and realms unknown.

Centuries long the Dream broods on though
tides of wrong surge wild below,
Broods above the sightless tumult while the ages
come and go,

And the floods grow calm and calmer as the
cycles whirl away,
Till the Dream is regnant Truth and nations
come beneath its sway;

Then a new Dream of the Ages mounts to Manhood's awful throne,
Broods and conquers through the cycles till the
whole world is its own.

So the hard unbending Real which with cruel
strength compels
Man the helpless worm to creep and eat the dust
wherein he dwells,

Yields to the Eternal Manhood brooding through
his silent years,
And the Man, his dreams made flesh, mounts up
through widening careers,

Grasps the wheel with conscious hand, the pilot
of Earth's stormy bark,
And with eyes on God's stars gazing guides the
nations through the dark.

Mounting so with firm foot planted on the
wrecks of conquered wrong,
Man, embodied Cosmic Hope, stands forth at
length a titan strong,

Wrestles with the dragon-brood that still his
upward way infest,
Cheered amid the mortal conflict, girded for the
endless quest.

Happy Age that saw the shackles burst from
fifty million hands,
Saw the hunted beast of burden, trembling in the
marish lands,

Into man transformed, transfigured, cleansed by
streams of precious blood
Poured in red unstinted measure,—millionfold
baptismal flood,—

Whose red chrism has healed the nations! O ye
Freemen! O ye Just!
Shall we stand as idle dreamers o'er our fallen
patriots' dust

And permit the sons of freemen in our land to
be enslaved,
Unprotesting when the injustice falls on him our
fathers saved?

But the Age rolls on above them, and the evil-doer dies,
For the tide of Life is setting toward the side
where justice lies.

Happy Age that saw the monarch sinking to the
servant's place,
And the free man rising regnant o'er the tyrants
of his race !

Happy Age that saw the priesthood sinking into
slow decay,
And the free soul mounting regnant into heaven's glorious day !

Happy Age that saw the letter perish from the
sacred page,
And the spirit shining regnant in the soul life
of the sage !

Happy Age that saw a chaos leap into a universe
At the magic touch of science, Truth dispel the
ancient curse,

Drive the demons from the air, and drive the
gods from out the sky,
Purge the earth of half her evil bidding all her
follies fly !

Happy Age that saw the Yonder fading from the
dreams of men,
And the Now of Love's occasion dearer than a
ghostly Then !

Happy Age that conquered distance, brought the
heavens down to man,
Narrowed all the hostile oceans to a river's
friendly span.

Saw the far horizon lift and distant nations
heave in sight,
Saw the isolated burgher grown at length cosmopolitan!

Happy Age that conquered time, the hoar ally of
distance gray,
Changed the centuries to years, and crowded
seasons in a day,

Flasht the lightnings, sped the couriers, keeping
thought's impetuous pace,
Sent the electric thrill of manhood widening
down the human race!

Lo, a hand unveils the ages, flashing on my
startled sight,
And a voice of power prophetic cries from out
the darkness, "Write!"

See! Two mighty rival races filling all the happy
earth,
Rivals still in glorious deeds but conscious of
one common birth.

Gone the tread of armed feet, and gone the
champing battle-steed,
Breathes the gentle Ocean-stream from all his
hostile navies freed,

Sunk in quiet beds of ooze and lost a hundred
fathoms deep

Lies the last death-belching monster muzzled in
Lethean sleep;

Glides the plowshare through the ruins of the
forts of old renown,

Harvests wave with golden hope where stood
the ancient walled town;

Marshes drained, saharas watered, harnessed
winds and cataracts,

Tropic belts of tangled Eden wrought to habit-
able tracts;

Gone the city's crowded space that bred a ver-
min race of men,

Gone the pest-infected airs exhaled from Vice's
reeking den;

Happy millions dwell in peace dispersed on fer-
tile vale and down,

Here an orchard-scented hamlet, there a park-
embosomed town;

Rich and poor forgotten evils, crime and sick-
ness slunk away

Shamed and conquered by the beauty of the
soul's untrammelled sway;

Flesh made pure and sweet within, the temple
of a chastened life,

Dead the feud of body and soul and closed the
passions' blinding strife;

Birth the sacrament of hope, and death the old
man's crowning grace,—
Hallowed sunset after sunrise,—keeping still an
equal pace

That no earth-born soul by climbing cause an-
other soul to fall,
But our Mother's ample bosom be the nourisher
of all;

Less and less the Code's compulsion, more and
more the inward Law,
More and more disintegration of the power that
holds in awe,

More and more new integration by the bonds of
free consent
To the Inward growing Outward—social life's
embodiment;

Gone the hope of selfish heavens, come the faith
in deathless deeds,
Sunk the individual wish in serving universal
needs,

Will and Fate at length consenting, Life far-
seeing and sublime,
Reaping now in wise content the harvests of the
Coming Time.

“Prophet!” cries the voice of thunder; “leap a
hundred ages back!
Lo, the nations, how they struggle in the old
war-beaten track!

Speaking courteous words of peace but cramming brutish arsenals,
Turning wholesome bread and wine to monster navy-sinking shells !

These must perish from the earth and lose their curst inheritance ;
Dying now the Latin nations, dying even glorious France—”

But a wreath of smoke low trailing hides the vision from my sight,
And the deafening wheels of commerce drown the voice that bade me write.

O ye clamorous sons of Trade ! Alack, the perilous thirst for gold !
Worship still the least erected of the fallen gods of old ?

From the valley of the shadow of that gilded thing, Success,
Lift your eyes, O burdened nations, to the hills of Helpfulness !

Hear the call of the Ideal like a trumpet from the van.
Gird your loins and quit the valley for the dawn-lit heights of man.

Grandest Age of all the ages since the march of mind began
From the dull unconscious atom to the crowning type of man,

Vale! Vale! Strokes of midnight! And a solemn
passing hour!

Vale! Vale! Parting splendor, shall we mourn
thy passing power?

Salve! Salve! Turn we forward from the sable
funeral car!

Salve! Salve! Mightier Aeon, heralded by Love's
own star!

Star of all the countless ages, Hesper of the ages
gone,

Phosphor of the unborn æons, Hesper-Phos-
phor, Night and Dawn!

How the heart leaps up to greet thee, Bringer of
a mighty hope,

Light that lightens down the darkness where the
infant nations grope!

Heir of all that mind has conquered, son of half
a million years,

Sharer of all vital progress, seed of endless new
careers,

Thirty circles of the months have fed my soul
ambrosial food,

And I pour a full libation to the Roman god that
stood

At the entrance of the years, and may he grant
one prayer to me,

That my steps may pass the midmost milestone
of the century,

That my eyes may see the fruitage of the seed
this age has sown,
That my hands may sow a harvest greater than
the world has known.

(I, the *type*, not I, the *ego*, held aloof from in-
tercourse,
Egotist of egotists that hold myself the uni-
verse.)

Hail, O Brothers! Hail, O Helpers! By a cosmic
law divine
All my work is wholly yours and all your work
is wholly mine.

Through ye only have I strength to mould me to
the cosmic plan,
Million brained and million handed, millionfold
a manly man!

Hail, Democracy, the star-eyed, climbing from*
the ancient mire,
Trampling down their crowns and scepters who
forbid thee mounting higher!

Spread thy palm above all nations, teach all peo-
ples to be free,
Banish war's red pestilence, and bring the golden
age to be,

Tear the bandage from the eyes of partial Jus-
tice that her sword
Smite the votarists of Pluto till their stolen
gold's restored,

That her scale-beam tip as lightly for the weak
as for the strong,
And her judgments ring out clearly through the
clamorous cries of wrong.

Lift the torch of Reason higher, set it by the
lamp of Faith,
Till their light forever banish Superstition's
sheeted wraith.

Warm the heart, expand the brain, and make the
spirit large and free,
Till we reach the godlike selfhood and devote
our strength to thee.

And beyond our power of asking lead us upward
into light,
Overrule us when we stray and strengthen only
in the right!

Hail, Democracy, the star-eyed, mounting ever
to the stars!
Hail to thee whose day is brightening with the
century's morning bars!

Slowly moves the hand of Progress o'er the dial-
plate of Time,
Till we half despair to see it move beyond the
hour of prime.

But if life appear to linger, nations halt or back-
ward creep,
'Tis the stalwart athlete, Nature, backing for a
mightier leap.

Shall we curse the age as senile just because our
hair is gray,
Count that light and hope are dead since even-
ing glooms about our day?

Life is *young*, Time's latest born, his arch of
promise lingers yet
Resting on its charmed gold, Youth's goal for-
ever onward set.

Aye the young man's dreams are truest, and the
burnt-out fires of age
But the dead and dying camp-fires of each last
preceding stage.

O despair not, men and brothers, deeming hu-
man nature weak!
Toothless age must ever mumble through his
snow-heaped hollow cheek,

That the year is growing cold and the harvest-
fields lie dead,—
Stubble where he hoped for blade, and sunlight
changed for skies of lead.

When ten thousand ages toiling fashioned man
their crowning work,
Shall we find that potent seeds within his in-
most being lurk,

Waiting only fair occasion to expand to hideous
life
And destroy the rarest fruitage of developmental
strife?

What a million years have made no less than
million years can mar.

Then despair not, men and brothers, though per-
fection lingers far,

For we judge as simple children when we make
our little day

God's criterion of progress and the measure of
his way.

Forward! then the century's birth-cry! Forward!
still the cry of Youth!

Forward! yet the hope of manhood! Onward to
the goal of Truth!

Forward! though the days be gray that follow
morning's purple bars!

Forward! for the darkest night is ever thickest
sown with stars!

Come, thou hoped-for happier Aeon, sung by
bards, by seers foretold,

When the earth shall bask in sunlight of her
lordlier Age of Gold!

Or, if floating in the distance far beyond our
power to seize,

Drop the mirage of its splendor just beyond our
certainties,

That the glamour of Time's promise, hovering
o'er the horizon line,

May compel its own fulfilment in the evolving
Life divine!

Dec. 26, 1900.

A GRAY DAY.

I

A gray day
For a May day
And a gloom in the heart for me!
O the puppet play!
And they dance as gay
As the crickets leap
In a scented heap
Of new-mown hay!
And I, ah me,
The one in a million to see!

II

A ghost hand
From the coast-land
Whither all things hurry and flee!
O the unseen hand!
How its fingers expand
And clutch at the wires!
And the play retires
To the shadowy strand.
And I, ah me,
The one in the million to see!

III

A chess game,
(A mere dress game,)

With helpless pieces aboard!

O the bootless game!
Knights fall for fame
As the pawns for food
Or the Ermine's good,
Kings checked the same!

And I, ah me,
One conscious pawn in the horde!

IV

A ghost hand
From the lost land

Whither all things stagger and reel!

O the cold mist hand!
Its fingers are spanned,
And knight and pawn
And bishop are gone
And the game is banned!

And I, ah me,
The one in the million to feel!

V

A blind law,
(Were't a kind law?)

Which the uttermost stars obey!

O the pitiless law!
An insatiable maw
Engulfs all lives,
And what survives
Has tooth and claw.

And I, ah me,
Must prey, or become a prey!

VI

I could dream,
(O a good dream!)
That the fecund years might see
The dusk grow to gleam,
The ice burst to stream,
The thistle make room
For the rose to bloom,
Use and beauty supreme!
But this, ah me,
Takes the millions of years to be!

VII

A clear voice,
And a near voice,
Speaks out of my soul to me.
O the sweet clear voice!
O freedom of choice
That the clear voice speaks!
O the light on the peaks
Where the dawns rejoice!
But I, ah me,
The message is false, I can see!

VIII

It grows old,
Ay, it grows cold,
For suns and systems will die!
O the spaces untold!
Worlds of worlds manifold
All coming to naught!
O why were they wrought
To perish in cold?
And I, ah me,
To breathe but one instant and die!

IX

What discord
With this chord
Struck sharp from the lyre of my soul!
O the trembling chord!
Like the thrust of a sword
In a valiant heart
Is the poignant smart
Of Fate's stern word.
For I, ah me,
Am a part to be ruled by the whole!

X

O the gray day,
The lost May day,
And the gloom in the heart for me!
O the puppet play!
Let it dance away
As the crickets leap!
Let them blindly keep
Life's holiday,
Though I, ah me,
Am fated to feel and to see!

April 24, 1900.

BEN HADAD.

Ben Hadad toiled along an endless road,
A massy wall of stone on either hand,—
Mecca his goal—and ever as he strode
His sandals crushed into the yielding sand.
Bowed down beneath a shapeless heavy load
With anxious eye the narrow way he scanned.

One day—no whit less weary than the rest—
Ben Hadad heard swift footsteps from behind,
Yet turned not to behold the pilgrim guest—
Whose haste betrayed him godlessly inclined—
But labored undistraught like one possessed
Of some diviner passion than his kind.

“Allah be praised, who made this glorious day,
Good friend, and dropped it fresh from Paradise
To lighten pilgrim feet upon their way!
The heart leaps up to see such sapphire skies
Arch spotless o'er earth's festal cup of clay
Where Allah mingles priceless wines and spice!”

“A drunken word, and blasphemous as well!”
Ben Hadad answered, plodding on apace.
He saw not how unwonted shadows fell,
Cast by the radiance of his fellow's face,
Nor marked the queer round shoulders—like the swell
Of sleeping wings—that marred his tunic's grace.

“A spotless sky? What madness this, I pray?
Spiced wine! ’Tis by our holy word forbidden!
Our prophet spoke naught of ‘a glorious day.’
What he revealed not is most wisely hidden.
Look to your feet, and keep the narrow way,
A blameless walk, a spotless soul unchidden.”

“Look up, Ben Hadad! Trust the living eye!”
The shining guest replied, and smiled benignly:
“Old laws decay and with their givers die,
But Allah still renews himself divinely
To heart and soul that ever open lie
To Truth and Beauty. Take not thus supinely

Life’s arduous gifts. These walls on either hand
Though scarce breast high, shut out the world
from you.
Behold the olive groves that dot the land,
The gardens and the lilyed fields in view,
The palm’s tall hostelry by zephyrs fanned
That waves mute welcome to the pilgrim
crew.”

“Allah forbid!” Ben Hadad straight replied:
“Though I had faith beyond the prophet’s
measure,
I would not rise. To prove a madman lied,
What saint would jeopardize his earthly trea-
sure?
This sacred pack upon my shoulders tied
I’ll scarce discard to do a stranger pleasure.”

“Pray, what unshapely thing is this?” he cried,
And smote the burden with his knotty staff.
Great clouds of dust burst forth on every side.

The shining guest pealed forth a hearty laugh:
"An ancient bed, I'll warrant, true and tried,
By daily use worn down to musty chaff."

"Have you no rootage in the sacred past?
No treasures rescued from the pirate years?
No priceless old memorials that last
From age to age? Pour forth your vollied
sneers,
Rash infidel, I care not for the blast.
The ear alone such idle mocking hears."

"An inventory!" And again that laugh.
Ben Hadad answered with indignant grace:
"A bronzen tablet with an epitaph
Snatched from the tomb of him who sired our
race;
A foot-worn doorsill, broken quite in half,
The threshold of our first abiding-place;

"A tent-cloth stained by sun and morning dew,
My grandsire's shelter when he fled from
home;
A sword-hilt, set with gems, wherewith he slew
A templar-knight; a crescent from the dome
The sheik, my father, built in Kambalu,
Beside the infidel's huge hippodrome;

"My mother's loom; a lock of silver hair;
The prophet's holy word securely bound;
My swaddling clothes; an old illumined prayer;
The collar of my brother's faithful hound;
The crib that knew a nurse's watchful care
When childhood's dreamless sleep enswathed
us round.

“These have I kept, though grieved at heart to
know

So much must perish of no meaner worth.
These will I keep, and when at last I go
To Allah’s bosom, and forsake the earth,
My son shall have the pack, and I bestow
My wayworn sandals to increase its girth.

“Allah is God. He shall not lose through me
One tittle of his world’s uphoarded gain!”

Ben Hadad ceased. His fellow wept to see
The tortured form, the martyrdom of pain,
And sighed: “Allah is God! May he set free
Ben Hadad’s soul from all its labors vain!

“Lose all and gain all!” Here the angel guest
Touched with his staff the vast unshapely pack.
Its cords in sunder broke at this behest.

The huge bulk rolled in dust from off his back.
Ben Hadad rose erect with startled breast
And saw no more the narrow beaten track.

He saw the sapphire skies, the olive groves,
Gardens and lilyed fields on either hand,
White cornfields waving, flights of turtle-doves,
And lofty palms by gentle breezes fanned,
Sheep on a hundred hills, cattle in droves,
And happy towns that dot the pleasant land;

And o’er him, mounting in seraphic flight,
His guest. He smiled, and fell upon his face
And died. For joy at that unwonted sight,
Or from despair, none knew. But Allah’s
grace

Upon his corpse, in death’s benignant light,
Of that first smile preserved the blessed trace.

THE BALLAD OF THE GOOD SHIP “DAUNTLESS.”

Three weeks with never a breath of wind
Off Wynland's marches moored
The captain's good ship 'Dauntless' lay
With all her crew on board.
Her flag hung dead at her tall masthead,
No ripple round her poured.
The sea-birds circled overhead
And screamed across the fjord.

The grizzled captain paced the deck,
He strode impatiently.
His eye now marked the frozen land,
Now swept the western sea.
Upspake the mate in sore estate:
“O captain, sennights three
We've waited the rising of the wind.
What may the matter be?”

The captain raised his sullen glance,
 He lifted his hand to the sky:
“Why serve we longer the great White Christ
 Who thrones with God on high,
When a Wynland hag with a tattered rag
 His rule can thus defy?
The hand that is far when help is cried
 For harm can not be nigh!”

Then spake the pilot, a man of blood,
 And a mighty oath he swore:
“O captain, give me your goodly sword
 And of men a gallant score.
I'll scour the land on every hand,
 I'll hunt through mountain and moor,
Till I bring you this hag with her tattered rag,
 In chains from yon frozen shore.”

“Go, take my sword and of men a score,
 And bring me the sisters weird!”
“O women weird, ye feel my power,
 No longer are ye feared.
Now give me a breeze to skim the seas,
 Or by Beelzebub's beard
I'll perch your heads on the tall masthead!”
 His words the pilot cheered.

“Ho, ho!” they cried, those sisters weird:
 “Fair winds hath this tattered rag.
Three pounds tobacco, a pipe apiece,
 Three guineas of gold in a bag,
And the captain's ship shall dance and skip
 And never a moment lag
Till English wives and English babes
 Shall greet his homeward flag.”

The captain took their hell-wrought clout,
But a crafty man was he.
He smote the captives with his sword.
The crew cheered merrily.
That magic shred to the tall masthead
The captain nailed in glee.
Three knots in a string, and a tattered rag,—
Three winds he held in fee.

He clove the first knot with his sword.
A wind rose steady and strong.
“Home, homeward bound!” the pilot sang,
The crew joined in the song.
Right merrily sped she straight ahead
All day and all night long.
The sea-birds scream across the main,
The sea-beasts round her throng.

His good sword clove the second knot,
The wind, it blew a gale.
It veered now east, it veered now west,
The mate grew ghastly pale.
The good ship lunged, she leaped and plunged,
And shuddered with straining sail,
But she held her way for a night and a day,
Though waves dashed o'er her rail.

“Ho, ho! my good ship rides the storm,”
The burly captain cried:
“The gale in the cordage whistles and howls,
Such song is the seaman’s pride.
So gallantly borne, by the morrow morn,
At anchor we shall ride,
And English wives and English babes
Shall gather at our side.”

His good blade leaped and clove once more.
The gale, it grew a blast.
The billows leaped, the good ship crashed,
The captain stood aghast.
For straight ahead from the ocean's bed
A rock rose ribbed and vast.
The loosened demons shrieked and laughed
As on to her doom she passed.

The White Christ smiled on the waters wild,
They grew as smooth as glass.
Next morn on a wild and unknown coast
A wide-eyed fisherman's lass
At play on the sand of the salt sea strand
Saw floating corpses pass;
But never a priest in all the land
For their wandering souls said mass.

MID CLOVER BLOOMS.

O to lie mid the tangled blooms,
A child of Earth and the blue June skies,
And list to the song of the bumblebees
That tipsy with honey go tumbling over
From head to head of the purple clover
That swing in the clutch of their golden knees!
O to lie 'neath the blue June skies
In tune with the life of the scented glooms!

The cricket sings where the golden light
Is quenched in the dusk of the standing grass,
And the grasshopper climbs to the topmost leaf
To bask in the sun of rare midsummer,
A holiday guest and chance new-comer,
That drains life's cup though the feast be brief

Nor grieves at last o'er the empty glass
As he drifts in dream to the voiceless night.

The katydid calls from her leafy bower,
And a boisterous sisterhood over the way
Affirm and deny with impetuous zeal,
A gossiping town without purpose or guerdon,
Till the garrulous hedgerow grows a burden,
While the shrill cicada with mail of steel,
From his tall acacia startles the day,
And stabs with his song the noontide hour.

O white cloud floating in liquid blue,
That driftest so lazily over my head !
A breath blew out of the west at morn,
And out of the void of the fleckless ether,
Rejoicing to greet fresh fields beneath her,
A feathery form, sweet cloud, was born !
Shall her bright life for their thirst be shed ?
Or melt in the blue sky whence she grew ?

O to lie in the scented glooms,
A child of Earth and the blue June skies,
And list to the voices of summertide,
And feel the beat of life's mystic weaving,
With an open heart life's gifts receiving,
A pensioner willing on bounties wide !

O to lie 'neath the blue June skies,
At one with the purple clover blooms !
Nov. 23, 1901.

THE VANISHED WOODS.

How changed the scene from what I knew,
Sweet woods, when last we bade adieu!
The woodman's axe has loudly rung
December's ice and snows among
And chased each Dryas from her berth
To feed some ravenous-throated hearth.

Perennial woods I deemed ye then,
Centennial peace for unborn men,
A sacred gloom for revery,
The nurse of star-eyed poesy,
Sequestered shrine and husht retreat,
Unstained by greed's unhallowed feet,

And in your scented shades I nursed
A life in richest dreams immersed,
While numbers to the visions came,
Songs careless of or name or fame,
Where beauty seemed its own excuse
And song the soul's most perfect use.

Reclined full-length beside the stream
That guiltless of day's garish beam
Ran darkling down and gurgling broke
O'er serpent roots of gnarled oak,
I gazed upon one rift of blue:
The softened radiance sifted through

And iris mingled with the green
The drooping beechen boughs between,
Until its far-off glory seemed
The goal of all the poets dreamed.
So lost in reverie I lay
And dreamed the golden hours away!

O shameful idleness and sloth,
Companion to the rust and moth!
O judge not so, poor dreamless friend;
The lily of the field may spend
Her whole sweet life 'neath unsought skies,
Her cup unseen by mortal eyes,

And yonder pink anemone
That nods so lightly unto me
Sits dreaming by the brooklet here
In silence through the whole long year
To bloom one week in modest wise
For one chance pair of charmed eyes.

In sooth, good friend, it seems to me,
A dreamer born, howe'er it be,
That idle dreams are food and drink,
That one hour by a river's brink,
Lapped cool in dappled shade, is more
Than all your wise men's thrifty lore.

O wasteful purblind prodigals
Intent upon your barns and stalls,
Heap high your stacks of yellow sheaves,
Feed fat your herds of shining beeves,
And take no thought for aftertimes,
For aftertimes nor poets' rhymes.

Heap on the wood and toast your shins
And snugly dream of bursting bins,
Of widening fields of new-cleared land,
Of virgin soil on every hand,
Of log-heaps, smoking pioneers
That make a way for whitened ears.

O sordid Comfort, full-fed Ease,
Green-shuttered there 'mid orchard trees,
For whom the rain of apple-blooms
Is only sweeter than the glooms
That linger round my beechen roots,
By promise of autumnal fruits,

I thought that Greed had shunned this space
To chaffer in the market-place,
But lo, his hand is everywhere!
Alas for all the good and fair!
His hand has slain my favorite trees,
And all I loved are gone but these.

O wasteful purblind prodigals,
When the tornado madly falls,
Unroofs your barns, and blinding rains
Spoil half the season's garnered grains,
When frost pulls up your clover-roots
And blights in May your blooming fruits,

When whole young orchards winter-kill,
Unsheltered from the storm-king's will,
When snowless wheatfields freeze and thaw,
When crows o'er sprouting cornfields caw,
When summer drought burns all things dry,
And lawns are parched, and meadows die,

Then reave you hair and beat your breast
And bring an offering of the best,
Make feast with open heart and free,
And plant each year some noble tree
Those banished Dryads to placate
And wrongs ancestral expiate !

June 2, 1900.

A SONG OF RENEWAL

Fling wide my garret window
Here in my house on the hill,
Far out in the edge of the city
Where sounds of traffic grow still !
I will lounge in the open casement,
I will perch on the window-sill,
To breathe for one moment, a freeman,
And cast off my gyves with a will.

Out yonder the fields are basking
In July's golden glare,
Ripening harvests of beauty
In the languorous murky air,
While here I perish of mildew,
And rot with profitless care.
Old books, adieu ! And my papers,
Farewell ! Long truce to despair !

I will fly this parchment kingdom,
 This mine of the Arimasps,
This universe of vellum,
 Of leather and brazen hasps,
Where the soul is pent and straitened
 In boards with double clasps,
And the mind like a pinioned demon
 For freedom struggles and gasps;

Where I feel like a marginal figure
 In purple and green and gold,
Done with an infinite patience
 By a dull old monk of old,
As conventional, dead, and unmeaning,
 As the empty tale retold
It illumined in gaudy splendor,—
 To crumble at last into mould;

For here the soul is a quarto,
 Or at best but a folio,
And I long for the perfect unfolding
 That mortals seldom know,
To lie spread out and unbroken
 In God's supernal glow,
The Cloud-Compeller above me,
 The old Earth-Mother below.

Out yonder the fragrant meadow
 Dotted with hay-cocks stands.
I can hear the workmen's laughter
 As they ply their busy hands,
Heaping the giant hay-bed
 As it creaks through the bottom-lands,
Drawn like a car triumphal
 At some high-throned queen's commands.

Who guides yon rural progress?—
No less than a queen, I vow!—
'Tis the farmer's buxom daughter,
As lithe as a nymph, I trow;
A golden rock-rose in her hat-band,
Her nut-brown cheeks and brow
Aglow with health and beauty
That queens might envy her now.

And over beyond the rail-fence,
Mantled with ivy and vines,
Where the purple ripe raspberry nestles
And the evening primrose shines,
The dead-ripe wheat is standing,
Straw-broken, with pendant crines,
And unhidden by stewards of Ceres
The querulous sparrow dines.

And down in the lower bottoms,
Along the dreaming brook
That winds down its slumberous valley
In many a sickle's crook,
Where willow and sycamore, stooping,
At their sun-flecked images look,
The cattle breast-deep are standing
In many a shady nook.

And away and around in the blue haze,
To vision's uttermost bourn,
In billows of green that from evening
Run to the shores of morn,
Round meadow and pasture and wheat-field,
Stretches the sea of the corn.
O why should the city's toiler
Yon teeming paradise scorn?

For there is a tangled Eden,
Where the trimmers' hands are too few
To garner the gifts of Ceres
While serving Pomona as true.
So wilding beauty runs riot,
And the weeds, a rollicking crew,
Preempt every chink of the sunshine
And stretch out their palms for the dew,—

But see! There's a pause in the haying!

The hay-bed, piled to the boom,
Is ready to choke with its fragrance
The barn's wide-throated room.
Now the jug with its beaded coolness,
Filled from the well's deep gloom,
As dear as e'er flagon at banquet,
Is haled from its tangle of bloom

To gurgle around the circle
From lip to laughing lip.

Now deftly the farmer's daughter
From its cool rim takes a sip
To bless the draught for the workmen
As its waters bubble and drip.

Then here's to the Queen of the Harvest!
Long live toil's comradeship!

No longer my soul shall tarry
Wing-clipt in this ancient mew.
I'll away to the fields and meadows
Where living deeds are to do.
I'll out in the dews at sunrise,
I'll toil the long day through,
And wear out this mildewed body
And win me a soul anew.

And when the long day closes,
And life has forgotten its husk,
By the side of the farmer's daughter
In odors dearer than musk,
To the homestead nested in pine-trees
That bite the sky like a tusk,
To the goal of a rest supernal
I'll walk through the cool sweet dusk.

IMPERFECTION

Never a summer breeze
From his far sea-cradle blows
But lingers among the gardens
To sigh for one dead rose.

SONNET

My letter was returned with seal unbroken.
"Deceased!" Some cold official hand had
traced
The penciled euphemism in careless haste
To send across the world the joyless token,
That love's last word was left for aye unspoken.
Dead? Is he dead with whom I daily chased
The beauteous phantoms o'er great Homer's
waste
Wide ocean? Shipwrecked lies our vessel oaken?

O friends, why mock ourselves with gloomy
fictions?
Broad seas and broader years have not the
power
To rob true friendship of one precious hour.
We hold sweet converse still,—dare Fate's
restrictions,—
And face to face, whate'er cold reason saith,
We'll wander through the world untouched by
death.

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